

764 The custom of burying or otherwise placing with the dead all of his
 768 valuables, evidently existed at one time with these people. The Tiribis,
 who bury their dead, did so, up to within the memory of persons still
 living, and all matters that could not be buried, like live stock, fruit trees,
 &c., were ruthlessly destroyed. A more practical method has grown up
 [428] with the present generation, and they now divide the property of the de-
 funt among the heirs, with as much avidity as in more enlightened com-
 munities. So do the Bri-bris and Cabecars, but these compound with
 their consciences. Whether the Teribis have a similar custom, I am not
 prepared to say, not having seen a funeral, and having no information
 that I consider sufficiently trustworthy.

766 The next step after lighting the fire, was for the master of ceremonies,
 appointed by mutual consent, to cause to be collected some small scrap-
 ings of a peculiar wood, called Palo Cacique by the Spaniards. It is a
 wood used only for walking sticks, and will be again referred to in that
 connection. He also obtained a large lump of cotton wool, some seeds of
 a species of pumpkin, and a small root of sweet yucca. All the male friends
 of the deceased present, seated themselves on low benches in a double
 line, facing each other, with another bench between. A part of the cot-
 ton, spread out so as to make a bulk about the size of a man's hand, was
 placed in front of the principal person, who then began in a sing-song
 tone between a recitation and a chant, to relate the merits and deeds of
 their departed brother. As he proceeded, and mentioned for instance that
 he had planted much corn, he laid carefully on the cotton a piece of shaving
 which he said was the "planting stick" used in that operation. Another
 laid aside of it a piece of pumpkin seed, which represented the corn.
 Another taking up the song, related how he had shot fish, and another
 shaving was the arrow. An impromptu string a couple of inches long,
 twisted out of the cotton, and stained red with the powder from some
 anatto seeds, was a rope with which he had led a cow, bought years be-
 fore in Terraba. This lasted for an hour, until every tool or weapon he
 had ever used was represented by a little pile of seeds and shavings on
 the cotton. But he was a great man and his "eagle" was not to be for-
 gotten. A very rude imitation of it was cut out of the skin of the yucca
 root and placed on top of all his other property, and then the edges of the
 cotton were doubled over making all into a ball. This was placed on his
 breast, next his body, and he was thus armed and equipped with all he had
 used or owned in this world, ready for use in the other; and his heirs
 none the poorer.

The body was then enveloped in the piece of "mastate" or bark cloth
 that he had used as a blanket, together with the hammock in which he
 swung. A quantity of "platanillo" leaves, a leaf not unlike that of the
 plantain, but only half the size and much tougher, were placed on the
 ground, two or three deep. The bundle was laid on this, the edges of the
 leaf envelope, doubled over, and dexterously tied by strips of bark string
 and the whole turned out a very respectable Egyptian mummy done in

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savannas, and the Indians complain bitterly³¹¹ because many of these fields are being lost to nature, who is reclaiming her own.

Property and Inheritance. The oldest⁴²⁸ male member of the family distributes the property at the death of an individual. If the male members are too young, then the oldest female member does the dividing. Concerning the property, we may judge the economy of the tribe as a whole, more or less clearly from the situation in Boruca, the largest single community of these people.

Cattle is a rich man's privilege in Boruca.²³¹ Amongst the three hundred and twenty-four inhabitants, there are only one hundred cows.^[556] These are owned by sixteen individuals, no man having more than six. There are forty-seven houses in the town, however, and there is an ox for the majority of the households, at least one or more pigs, and numerous chickens. In addition to this, there are four bulls, each one with a separate owner, and twenty horses divided amongst six people. The pigs are^[439] raised to sell to the *ladinos* and to eat. The cows are seldom killed, but are used as a medium of wealth, to sell, or to pass on as an inheritance. The cows are seldom milked.^[556]^[234]

Social Organization. A few vestiges of an⁴⁷⁶ older communal relationship are seen in the former lack of individual farms, and today, in the *juntas* or "get-togethers" of the Indians. When a new house is to be built, the man who^[42] wants to erect it calls upon his friends for help, after he has collected the necessary material. They all join together, and the construction is ready in a short space of time, the owner giving *chicha*, and often food to the helpers. It is interesting to note also that on one day^[364] a year, designated now by the police chief, but formerly by the council, the men gather to cut the grass and to "clean" the village of Boruca. They go systematically from house to house, and cut all the weeds in sight. This helps to maintain Boruca as a cleared, sanitary spot.

Political Organization. Most traces of⁶²⁵ political organization have disappeared. The outstanding authority is the police agent, who is an Indian, but is appointed by the Govern-⁶²⁵ment of Costa Rica. He is, however, de-⁶²³

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bribri
Cabécar

767 always confined to funeral ceremonies where
 533 they chanted the deeds and merits of the de-
 775 ceased as well as sped the soul along on its
 614 journey to the other world through song. The
 Bribri Singers came from the *stsukur* or *stu'gur*
 clan according to Gabb and Pittier,¹⁰⁸ but the
 elders and medicine men in 1956 claimed that
 they belonged to the *sibawak*, *korrehué*, or
sinábwak groups. Gabb states that their office
 was hereditary,¹⁰⁹ and that they were next
 to the *usegLa* in importance. Pittier suggests
 heredity¹⁰⁷ and notes that they lived only by
 the lower Coen and had a number of assistants
 the highest of whom were called *ko*, and
 apprentices known as *siní*.¹⁰⁸ He adds that
 elaborate preparation was necessary before the
 title of Singer was won. This is not exactly in
 keeping with the idea that their position was
 hereditary.

614 Cabécar Singers had to come from the fol-
 lowing clans: *kibegruwák*, *sibawak*, *bLeriwak*,
 and *samirwa* (see The Clans and Myths:
Protectors of Clans). Their name in this lan-
 guage is *sagLa*.

198 Gabb,¹⁰⁹ speaking only about the Bribri,
 calls attention to the fact that the songs of
stsukur were in a language which neither he
 nor the uninitiated could understand. As
 Lehmann has pointed out, however, the Bribri
 Singers were in reality a Cabécar group,¹¹⁰
 according to his spelling and that of Pittier,
 the *korrehué*. We use *korrehué* because this is
 the pronunciation given by the Bribri today.
 There is, nevertheless, another angle to this
 problem, particularly if one accepts the state-
 ment that the Bribri Singers could come from
 one of the three clans mentioned above. This
 198 is the use of a "sacred language" by the
 177 medicine men of both Talamancan peoples
 when singing and the adoption of foreign
 songs even by the laymen. These aspects will
 be discussed later under Curing and Songs,
 respectively.

764 The Pacific Bribri and Cabécares, in lieu
 756 of Singers, have a ceremony called *setéhrwak*
 184 in Bribri which is carried out by the medicine
 man when someone dies (see First Burial).

¹⁰⁷ Gabb, 1873, p. 308; Pittier, 1938, p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Gabb, 1873.

¹⁰⁹ Pittier, 1893, p. 18.

¹¹⁰ Pittier, 1938, pp. 17-18. Could there be a connec-

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Bribri
Cabezar

601 tachiwa

Mo Fa Fa
Fa Fa Fa
So So
So Da
Da So
Da Da
Fa Mo Mo
Mo Mo Mo

mikuwa

- 423 Land Tenure. We have already noted that villages in the European sense are foreign to the Talamancans. The clan has a given area for the use of their members. This involves a river or creek (*see* Villages). The individual family plants in a different spot yearly within this territory (*see* Farming and Cultivated Foods). The Cabécares of the Pacific slope have begun to recognize land property. In Ujarrás, fences are seen around vegetable and house gardens. The Bribri, however, have only demonstrated such tendencies in the vicinity of the school.

- 428 Property. The property understood as individual and which can be handed down at death [422] pertains to personal effects and the house. [423] When a man dies his property goes to his brothers and sisters. If he has a mother they go to his mother. When she dies they go to whomever she wants to leave them, a son, daughter, etc. Today, however, everything goes to the children—not to the wife. The wife remains as guardian for the children. When a man dies without leaving an adult son, his head wife receives everything, but she is obligated to take care of the other wives until they remarry. The eldest son receives the greater portion, but all children have a share.

- 443 Trade. Markets were and are unknown among the Talamancan peoples. Trade was accomplished by itinerant groups or in areas set aside for this purpose. Products of the sea, such as salt and *chaquirá*, shell beads which 438 served as a medium of exchange, were important items in pre-Columbian times. Also in demand were gold, wild pigs, slaves, and cotton cloth.¹⁴⁰

- [437] Certain vestiges of this custom remain. In fact, in the remote areas, and even in Salitre and Ujarrás, articles are often traded and

¹⁴⁰ See, e.g., Fernández, 1886, vol. V.

756 term is *sjá* or *sienkúrua*. Individually, they are called *káuruu* or *dikúruu*; *sorkúruu* or *sorkúruu*. They resemble small river stones and are

778 sometimes found in pre-Columbian graves.

[172] Today, the stones are "given" or "appear" to the medicine man on special occasions, or are

handed down as a sacred heirloom by a col-

• [428] league who must also belong to the same clan.

When a medicine man dies, if he does not wish to give his own stones to a young professional, his brother or clan keeps them until a new doctor has need of them.

[155] Curing (see Curing) is impossible without these two stones although other ones are also used. Some are taken from the belly of a wild pig, tapir, deer, etc. These, besides being em-

[224] ployed for curing, are used to call the particular animal when one hunts and it is for this reason the Indians say that medicine men never lack game.

[824] Leaves with white spots, called *aik* (*Aracea* sp.) in Bribri, also are part of the curing paraphernalia. The sap is caustic and the leaf is used more as an indication of magic power than for any other reason.

[844] Tobacco for smoking is essential during childbirth. Other articles which compose a medicine man's equipment and which were left

[755] by *sibu* to be utilized while curing include the shell or body of a small land turtle, *kué*; a lizard, *trook*; the eyeteeth of jaguars; the feathers of certain water fowl, macaws, quetzals, hawks, and other birds; animal skins; and shells of which three are of particular importance. These are *tsumanik* and *tsrikuo*, a rose and white clam shell; and *duk*, a conch shell.

756 Training and Procedure. Although there is no fixed time required for preparing to become a medicine man, it usually takes from two to six years, depending upon the capacity of the novice's memory. The first six months are intensive. The apprentice goes for three days without eating. He makes a lean-to in the woodland out of all the herbs he can gather, edible and non-edible, and stays there for two days so as not to see the sun. At night he can go outside. During this period, the medicine man appears and teaches the ritual songs. After two days and two nights the teacher and his pupil eat all the edible leaves or herbs of the hut.

The next task for the novice is to obtain